

# Using the ICF framework for collecting information on the barriers to inclusion in children in the Republic of Kosovo.

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## Design and preliminary results.

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**Abstract** The Italian Development Cooperation has been intervening in Kosovo in the area of inclusion of persons with disability since 2008, supporting the Development of the first National Action Plan. In 2010, a new initiative was launched in partnership with the Office of Good Governance and the Municipality of Gjilan, where pilot activities were undertaken in order to promote an integrated approach to inclusion. The paper presents the preliminary results about the effort made in cooperation with the Italian WHO-FIC collaborating center to collect data on children with disabilities in the Municipality of Gjilan (around 100,000 inhabitants).

### Introduction

The Italian Development Cooperation has been intervening in Kosovo in the area of inclusion of persons with disability since 2008, supporting the Development of the first National Action Plan (1). In 2010, a new initiative was launched in partnership with the Office of Good Governance and the Municipality of Gjilan, where pilot activities were undertaken in order to promote an integrated approach to inclusion. Awareness of the 2006 UN Convention on Persons with Disability and the WHO Classification on Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) was built in cooperation with the Italian WHO-FIC collaborating center (2). The main obstacle for rational planning is the lack of information on persons with disability.

At Municipality level, information is scanty and fragmented, partially gathered by local chapters of the NGO HandiKOS (2011). According to the European Commission 2011 Progress Report, in 2008 Kosovo had a population of 2,153,000 (3): 346,000 were students, more than 1,000 of whom identified as children with special needs and attending regular schools (in so called attached classes) or special schools. In the same year, according to Unicef, an estimated 10,000 children did not attend school: 7,000 of them were children with special needs (4).

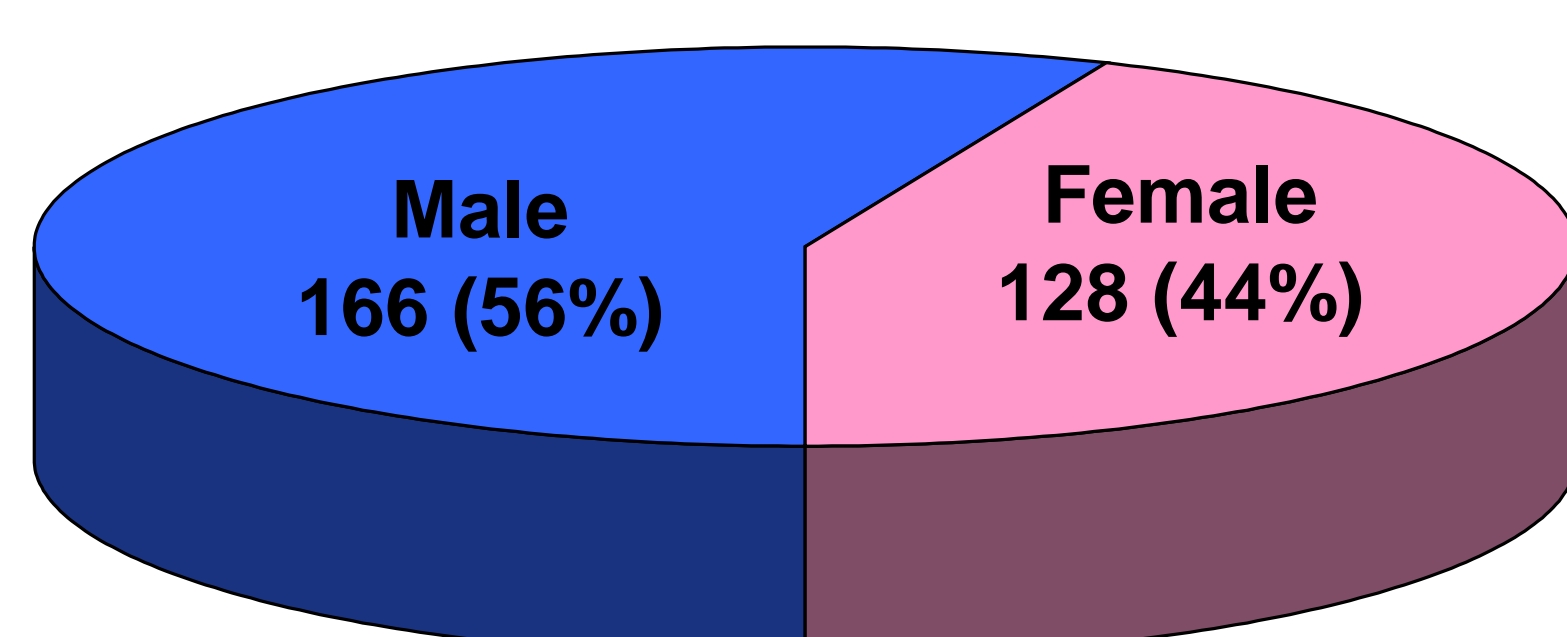
The high proportion of school-age children in the population and the characteristics of the education system as far as inclusion is concerned, have driven the attention of the study group on this particular age group. This paper presents the preliminary results of the effort to collect data on children with disabilities in the Municipality of Gjilan (around 100,000 inhabitants).

### Methods & Materials

A descriptive study was designed in order to provide a profile of children with disability, barriers faced in accessing education, health and social services, existing support network, and economic impact of the disease on their families.

A questionnaire was set up to collect information on different areas using the ICF framework. The interviewers were selected. The data collection started on 7 August 2012.

**Table 1 – Sample Gender**

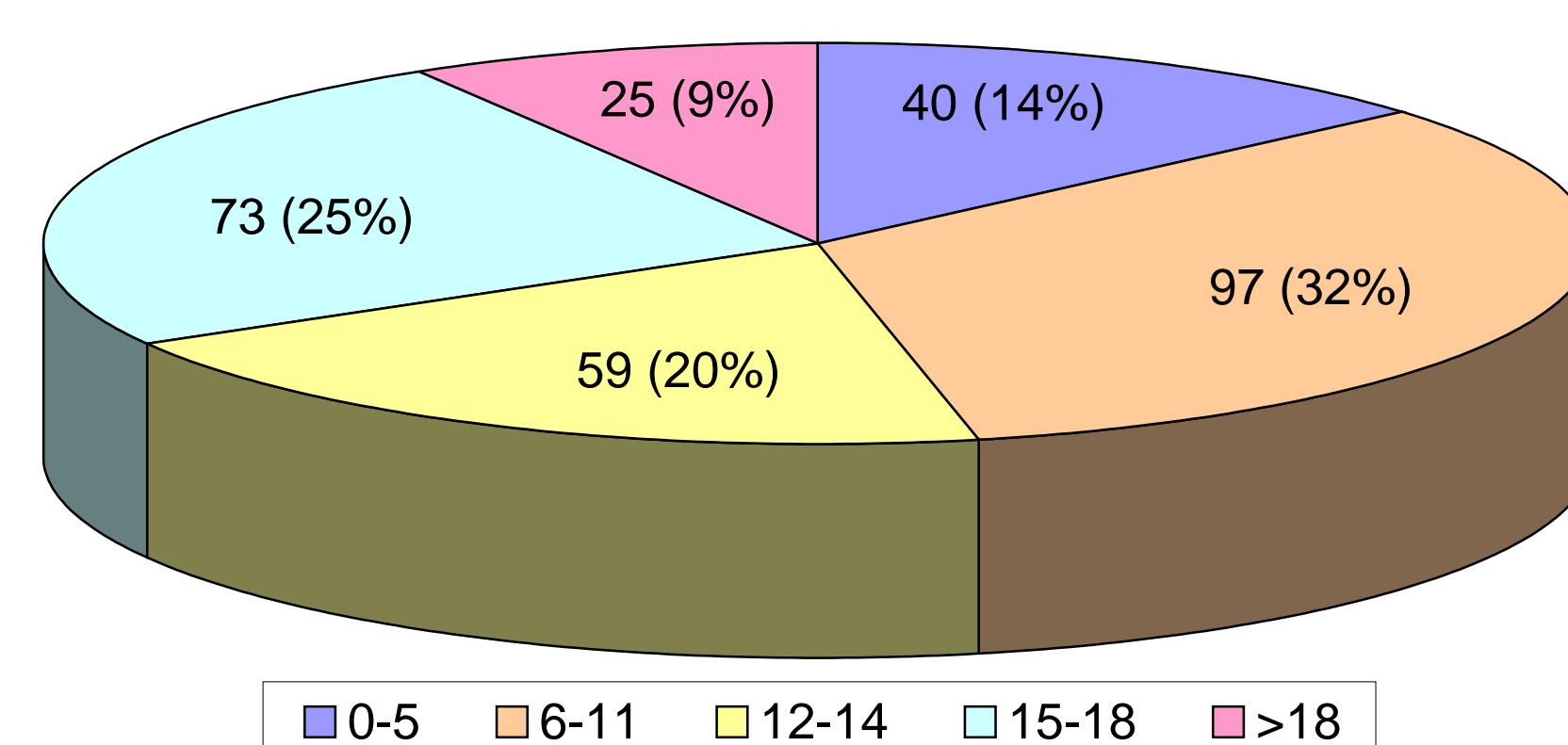


### Results

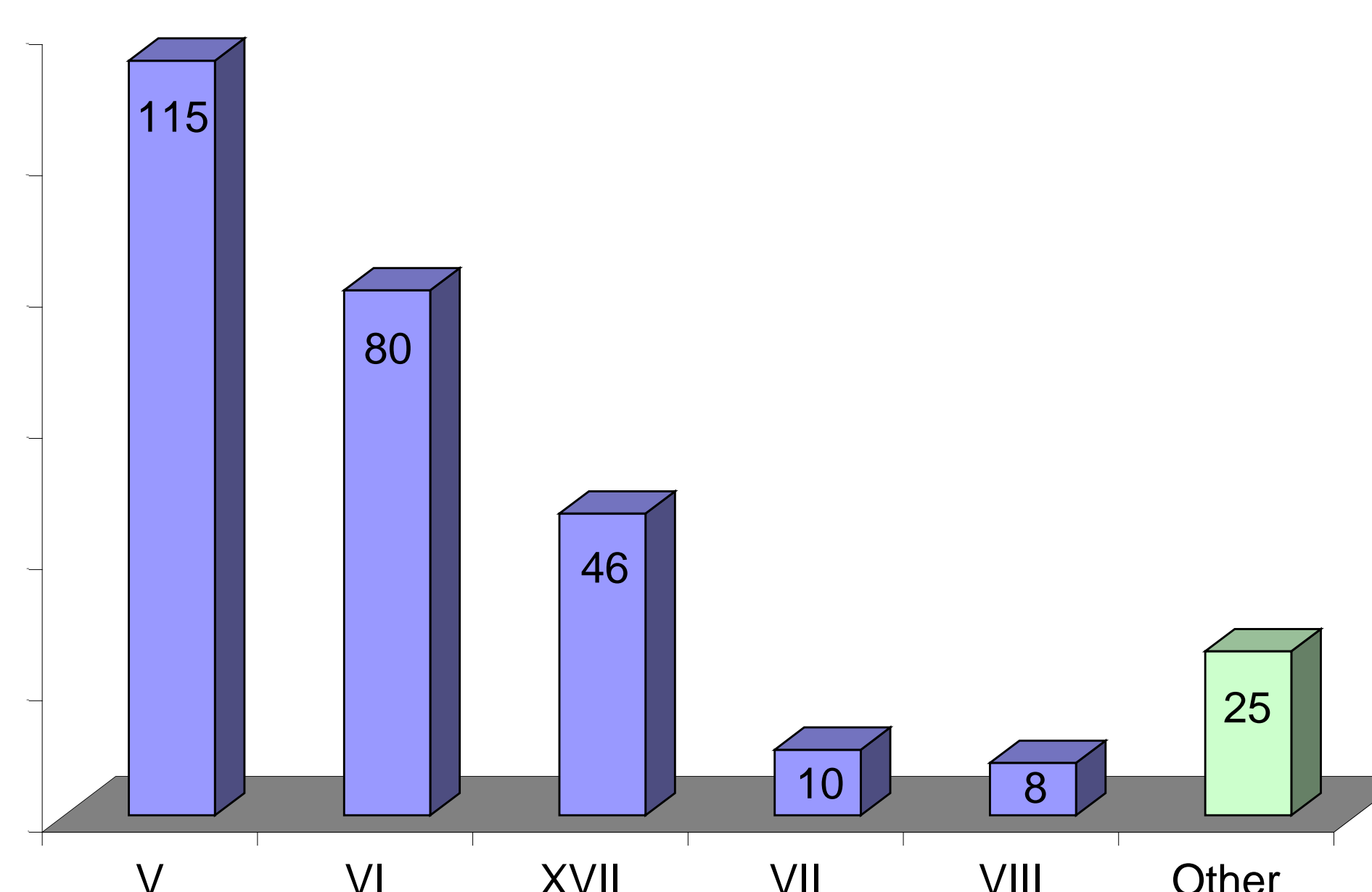
The sample was selected with the support of local institutions. It included 322 children whose families had applied, from July 2009 to March 2012, to the Commission for benefits granted by the Material Support Law (100 Euros a month).

56% of the children were males (Table 1). One third was 6-12 years old. 59 children with disability were attending local schools; of these, 40 are still on material benefits, whereas some have already been moved to another category, which means a lower benefit (45 Euros). As per Table 4, information on the diagnosis was collected from the final reports of the Commission for disability assessment: the diagnosis was defined only in 59% of the sample (CC), 28% had no diagnosis at all (ND), and 14% had an unreadable or incorrect diagnosis (TBS). Diagnoses were coded ex post by the Authors using ICD-10. The most frequent diagnoses pertained to ICD chapter V (39.4%), chapter VI (27.4%) and XVII (15.8%). This is consistent with the results of the Broad Survey of Persons with Disabilities in Kosovo (2011), which reported, among persons with disabilities aged 0-18 years, "Intellectual or learning disability" in 55% of the sample, and "Psychological or Emotional disorders" in 49% of the cases.

**Table 2 – Sample Age**

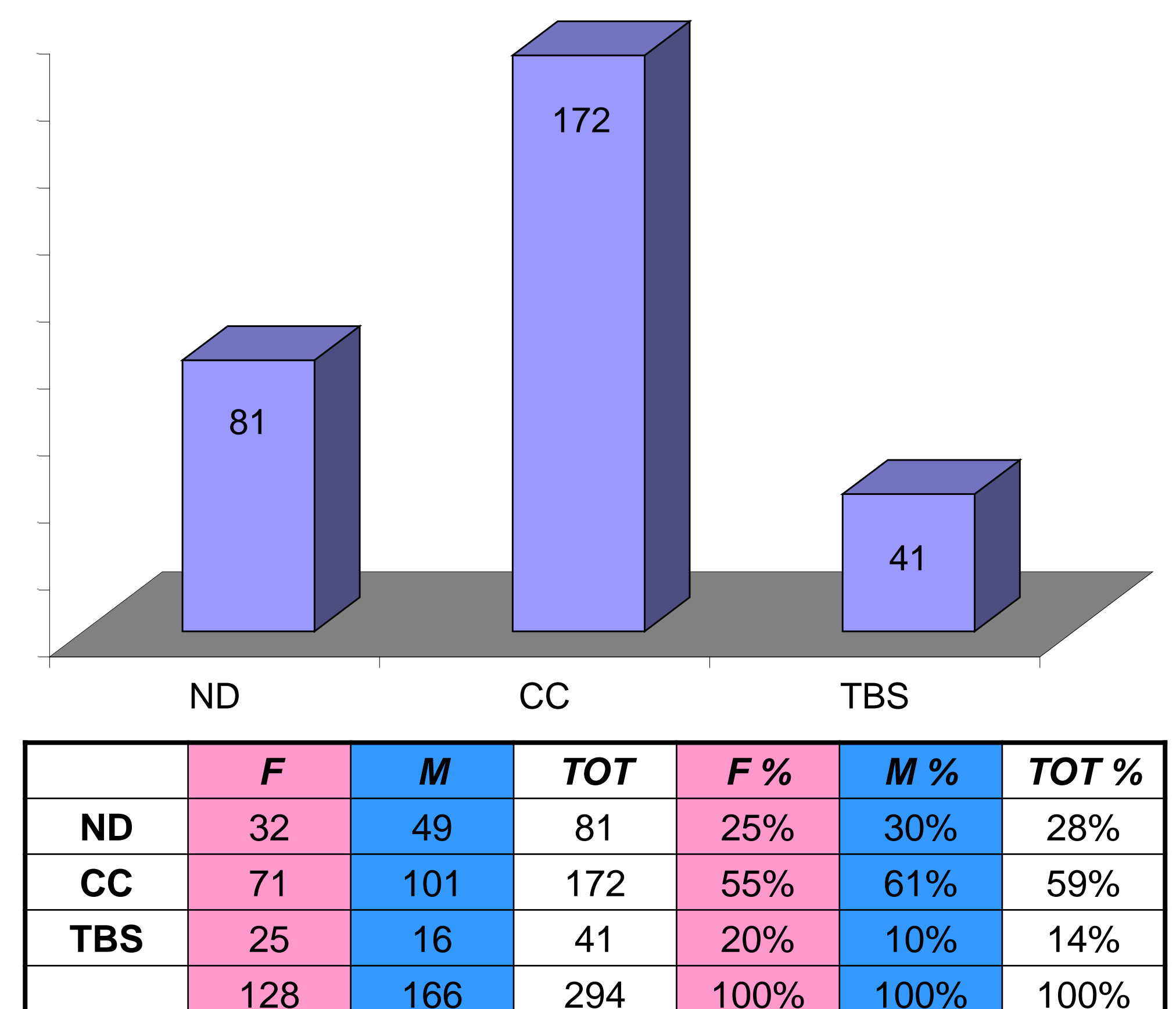


**Table 3 – Diagnoses in the sample**



Chapter	Female	Male	Total
V	51	64	115
VI	30	50	80
XVII	22	24	46
VII	3	7	10
VIII	4	4	8
Other	14	11	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>284</b>

**Table 4 – Diagnoses per child**



### Conclusions

Kosovo is a country in transition, in the process of refining and redefining its institutions; between 2008 and 2012, a key element has been the acceleration in the decentralization process at Municipality level. Education and accessibility have been considered as the most dynamic areas of inclusion and the optimal entry point to challenge a silted situation. Inclusive education requires attention and actions, notably to enhance the situation of marginalised groups such as children with disabilities. Data will be collected during the summer. A better understanding of the living conditions of children with disability will allow identification of gaps in the provision of services in the health, education, and social sectors. Moreover, it will provide critical information for the formulation of local policies, hopefully enhancing commitments and resources allocation from the government, both at central and municipal levels, and de facto implementing the existing legislation on the matter.

### Acknowledgements

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### References

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- (5) Republic of Kosovo, Office of the Prime Minister, Broad survey of Persons with Disabilities in Kosovo, Prishtina, December 2011